

CUPS AND RELAYS



Relays are a blast! There are lots of varieties that your participants might enjoy. This one helps teach the value of core stability. The task of carrying something is also a distraction that is an appropriate challenge for the automatic balance system. You can have them carry cups filled with water, cotton balls, wrapped candy on long wooden spoons, or trays with objects on them. The challenge here is to give them something to carry that they need to hold balanced and steady to transport it safely.

Benefits »

- ⦿ Demonstrates the usefulness of core stability.
- ⦿ Introduces a dual task to a mobility task.
- ⦿ Helps connect people through fun teamwork.

Set It Up »

Think about the logistics ahead of time. For any relay, you will need plenty of space and you'll need chairs set up in a way that is conducive for the relay—chairs at both ends, the right number of chairs, and so on. One team member at a time races as safely as is comfortable from one side of the room to the other. The mission is to spill as little booty (water, cotton, or candy) as possible while getting to the other side.

- ⦿ You'll need measuring containers for each team to score the results at the end. Each team also needs whatever they will carry the booty on or in. Trays, wooden spoons, cups, whatever. Team members carry the booty back and forth on or in these items. The most booty properly accounted for at the end determines the winning team.
- ⦿ If you're using water in cups, Styrofoam or plastic pill cups work best; paper cups get soft and leak quickly. For the most challenge, fill each cup all the way to the brim with water or booty. Don't use water if it will make the floors slippery.
- ⦿ If there are four people on each team, have four chairs on each side of the relay path. If you plan a square or circular route, you will not need double amounts of chairs, but do place teams on opposite sides. This keeps traffic cleaner.

This is a relay in which participants carry something, so you'll need some rules for people using walkers. Participants with walkers that have a seat can carry their items on the seat. Unfortunately, the no-seat walkers won't work. You can grant them an exception—they don't have to carry anything, but their team still will need their participation crossing the field. You could make sure both teams have the same number of walkers.

How to Do It »

- ⦿ Divide the group into teams, making sure there are equal numbers and abilities on each team. This is tough to do fairly, so just do your best. Then divide the teams in half and station the half-teams at opposite ends of the relay.
- ⦿ For this example, I am using four pill cups filled with water and placed on trays for each team. The first team member takes the tray and carries it across the room to his teammate as quickly as he can without spilling any of it.
- ⦿ When the first racer gets to the other side, he hands off the tray to the next team member and sits down.
- ⦿ Once he's seated, that's the signal for the next member to cross the room with her booty. This continues until all team members have completed the relay.

- At the end, combine each team's containers to see which team collected the most booty. The team with the most booty wins. Maybe something like chocolate kisses or candy gold coins would be good prizes.

Progress this activity:

- Racers hold the booty with both hands.
- Racers hold the booty above their shoulders or keep one hand behind their back.
- Make the route a little more circuitous (use agility cones to make the route like a slalom course or tape on the floor to make wavy lines like Holiday Lines (see page 316).
- Require change in plans or in direction (chairs on course can mark corners to turn around like a short maze).
- Make the path a little more perilous. Add an obstacle or two (such as soccer balls made of wadded up paper, one or two hurdles, a step, or a beam) to step through, over, or across. Keep the perils simple and small.



Keep It Safe »

It always amazes me how fast people want to move in a race. We don't necessarily want that. But they will want to go as fast as possible for their team. Remind them that this is about core stability and to only go as fast as they feel safe moving. They will end up with more booty that way anyhow.

When the games involve candy, everyone should get a piece, one way or another. It is only a game. For many games, having fun will be enough of a reward; don't feel you always need prizes. Make sure nothing they carry can become a tripping hazard if dropped. Water on a hardwood floor would be an example of an unsafe idea. On hard surfaces, like wood, tile, or linoleum choose a dry, soft booty to put in the cups.

Stay in the runways of your battle fields to hold a hand if needed or pick up anything that may be a hazard. Consider getting extra staff to assist on game days.

Live It »

Core stability has many benefits. The more stable they hold their body, the more booty they will get.